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ABSTRACT

Culminating a 10-year effort to include the study of Native Americans and their music as it reflects cultural realities, life, thought, religion, and history as a choice in requirements for graduation, the elective course, "Native Music of North America," is now recognized at Washington State University as meeting both "Humanities" and "Intercultural" needs for undergraduate students. This recognition attests to the worth of sharing knowledge of people of different traditions, especially of people with proven resilience and positive survival resources and the benefits derived from the values, ethics, and world-view espoused in Native American music. Non-Indian teachers can foster the growth of Native American music by grooming Indian successors; locating talented Indians who may major or minor in music; developing funding sources for educating young Indian musicians; interacting closely with reservation, community, and campus Indian groups; and developing and using only classroom materials approved by those represented. Technological advances, including inexpensive cassette tape recorders, have made Native music immediately accessible. Native performers, representing a range of Washington's Indian tribes can be brought to the campus for this and related courses. Movies, slide shows, audiotapes, monographs, videotapes, scholarships, and fellowships have been developed and approved for use in the class. (NEC)

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Native Music in College Curricula?

Loran Olsen

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A significant change has occurred on the Washington State University campus as exemplified by the course "Native Music of North America," to be re-offered in January of 1987. Although this course has been taught on and off since the spring of 1977 as an elective, cross-listed between Music and Native American Studies, it now reflects the new philosophy of general university requirements initiated at WSU. The course has received approval as meeting both "Humanities" and "Intercultural" needs for undergraduate students. It is an indication of the response from one educational institution to encourage the study of world civilizations and to apply interdisciplinary methods. It reflects the need to "transcend any single cultural tradition or approach to learning" and to "link a broad overview of the human past with more specialized subject areas." (Humanities Core Curriculum Committee, WSU.)

Choices in "Humanities" have traditionally embraced only written literatures. This action culminates a ten-year effort to have included among these options the artistic and "literary" endeavors of oral cultures. It addresses the question of whether study of Native Americans and their music (as it reflects cultural realities, life, thought, religion, and history) is important enough to include in choices of requirements for graduation of all WSU undergraduates. It affirms the premise that humanistic study in American colleges must not exclude the contributions emanating from the oral cultures of native North America, or from any other civilization for that matter.

American colleges must not exclude the contributions made by the oral cultures of native North America.

Less than twenty years ago campuses across our nation seethed with unrest. Among the many issues precipitating confrontations between students and administrators, students and faculty, faculty and administrators, were those pointing up the educational community's disregard of the contributions made by ethnic minorities to all facets of this society. After two global wars and two "limited actions" in Korea and Vietnam, this nation still had done little to solve modern domestic educational and societal problems revolving around facts about, and sensitivity to, its racial and religious minorities. However, our national policy had been to address similar issues for half a century all around the globe in the name of "keeping the world safe for democracy" and "fighting for basic human rights." We had even managed a trip to the moon!

Extensive nationwide efforts were long overdue in attending to fair treatment in jobs, voting, housing, and education. But even the very content of that education called for complete revision and refocusing as regards

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historical truths surrounding the experiences of minorities in America. As a result there sprang up in our institutions of higher education programs and departments of "Black Studies," "Chicano Studies," "Native American Studies," and later "Asian-American Studies," and "Women's Studies."

Efforts were long overdue to revise our view of the historical truths surrounding the experiences of minorities in America.

Whole new curricula came into existence—encompassing many novel approaches and some pedantic ones—to highlight these issues and to meet the immediate necessity of reducing pressure upon academia in its ponderous reaction to change. In the West it was change set in motion by events occurring over a century ago and including:

1. The "Westward, Ho!" movement
2. The Civil War
3. The gold rushes
4. Completion of the railroads
5. The Mexican War
6. Christian missionization
7. Indian treaties
8. Indian land allotments
9. The hiring of migrant workers.

These and more influences should have been grist for the curricular mills of this region's colleges and universities to explore, understand, and better interpret such phenomena and the human story evolving with them. The schools of the West might even have tried to bring to light among their constituents some viewpoints differing from those held by a long entrenched white majority.

Anthropologists and sociologists were likely to have chosen Native American preachers, Mexican-American migrant workers, Black athletes, or 1942 Nisei interns for doctoral dissertation subject matter. But it was rare to find within curricula recommended to the general student any offerings which might reflect a deeper sense of the significant role minority people have played in this society. Music departmental offerings were even less interesting—totally uniform nationwide in the inclusion of "core" courses, classical theory and history, and applied music. A perusal of catalogs as late as 1965 would give no sign of efforts to include regional music specialties or to develop in future music teachers, open-mindedness and sensitivity toward music as a worldwide human phenomenon. It was even rare to find courses in Jazz, regarded by some as The American Music. True American music was never included among professional curricular offerings. Hopefully those days and mind-sets are long gone.

The riots of the spring of 1969 at WSU produced a concentrated effort by students, faculty, and administrators to address minority issues. Black Studies, Native American Studies, Chicano Studies programs appeared in 1970. Many courses evolved, flourished and died for lack of enrollment. Others survived and became important to the campus community. Educated individuals representing the "token minority" were in demand to serve on every committee and commission until their efforts were spread so thinly as to become ineffective. Yet, some came through the stresses of budget cuts and administrative change. Now we enter a new era of opportunity to affect the thought and lives of WSU students who will be future teachers and citizens of the State.

The cultural, literary, and artistic heritage of Northwest Native Americans is a resource valuable to us all and to our children. It must gain fuller acceptance by educators at every level if past and present efforts to deal fairly with Indian nations and individuals residing in our state are to come to fruition.

Now that we have what we have been fighting for, it is also wise to ask again these questions:

1. Should one attempt to study Indian music at all in a college setting?
2. With virtually no Indians choosing music for master's or doctoral studies, who will teach such a course?
3. If a non-Indian teaches, how will adequate Native American input be insured for course content and balance?
4. What implications can such a course have for young people of all cultures?
5. How can proper treatment, priority and protocol be assured so that study in the name of scholarship not be allowed to compromise the privacy, personal ownership, and spirituality of songs?
6. Haven't Indian people been studied enough?
7. Why include these topics among the "Humanities?"

All young people can benefit from the values, ethics, and world-view espoused in Native American music.

Here are some responses: We must include Native Music in college curricula, for it is a window into the heart and soul of the people indigenous to this land. By its inclusion our universities once and for all attest to its worth. In this state which has 26 Indian reservations, such a study can help sensitize future teachers and citizens to contemporary issues affecting the lives of all of us. Who will teach? Any music faculty member now employed who has a feeling of responsibility to explore human musical thought from local cultures and is willing to be a student again. By involving Indian people at every stage of the development of curricula; by employing their services as teaching assistants, consultants, guest artists and interpreters of the art-form; by bringing young Indians to the enriching study of music—we can insure adequate input until a more capable teacher comes along. Get the program started and make a commitment to its success, but constantly check and ask the knowledgeable tradition bearers for help in determining the appropriateness of one's approach. Simple respect and human understanding, an attitude of reverence for timeless things, willingness to defer to the elders for approval and permission—all constitute an approach which should work within any culture. Young people from different heritages can benefit personally from exposure to the values, ethics, and world-view espoused in the music of Native Americans.

We live in a rapidly shrinking world with challenges and dangers to all. We are richer for the knowledge we can share.

Yes, Indian people have been studied enough—as peculiar subjects of social aberration, culture shock, alcoholism—but not enough as purveyors of humanistic truths through the arts, religion, history, and legends of their people. It is not enough to learn about songs and ceremonies of native people if one does not develop sympathy and understanding for them as humans maintaining a tradition against severe odds, sharing hopes and dreams with all of us. "Why humanities?" The response is, "It should have happened long ago." Our youth must learn to live in a rapidly shrinking world, replete with dangers and challenges for all people, and with added threats peculiar to this modern age. They will be richer for all the knowledge we can share, particularly from people with proven resilience and positive survival resources.

"All men are made by the Great Spirit Chief. They are all brothers." (Joseph, Nez Perce)

Suggestions for non-Indian teachers of Native American Music

1. Work toward putting yourself "out of business" by grooming an Indian successor.
2. Strive to locate talented young Indians who may major or minor in Music.
3. Help these talents get a full and well-rounded musical education, opening avenues for their artistic growth even if they are non-majors.
4. Encourage them also to become involved in the study of Native American music.
5. Help develop funding sources for educating young Indian musicians.
6. Interact closely with reservation, community, and campus Indian groups.
7. Develop and use only classroom materials approved by those represented.
8. If there is any question about the use or proscription of certain materials, ask knowledgeable people and then do only what is suggested.
9. Sensitize campus and community about the whole issue of Native American presence in the educational system.
10. Expedite the sharing of materials among all interested and helpful people.
11. Bring your own influence to bear toward righting societal and curricular wrongs.
12. Lend your name, energy, and expertise to the Native community's programs.
13. Keep a low profile and don't push!
14. Learn to wait; and plan to spend some time—like the rest of your life.
15. Shut up, and listen much more often than you think you should.

Individuals whose training would be enriched by the study of Native American Music

1. Future music teachers at elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels.
2. Urban Indian young people reared away from the reservation.
3. Native Americans curious about other Indian groups and the contributions they have made to human knowledge.
4. Anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, and sociology students.
5. Pre-medicine, pre-dental, public health, and nutrition majors.
6. Future law-enforcement officials, lawmakers, judges, politicians.
7. Fisheries, Game Management, Forestry Mining and Agricultural Extension students.
8. Communications majors in television, radio, news writing.
9. The general college student intending to live in the West.

Why is it timely to add to the music curricula now?

It is urgent and necessary because environmental issues, like the following, impact Indian and Eskimo people daily:

1. Nuclear power, nuclear waste management are of immediate concern.
2. Water rights litigation is increasing.
3. Fishing issues range from local to international in involvement.
4. Timber resources and management issues now are international in scope.

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5. Mining and processing of minerals occur on or near reservations, and
6. Wildlife management and preservation efforts alter native life styles.

The technological explosion, makes music immediately accessible

1. Inexpensive cassette tape recorders,
2. TV sets in virtually every living room,
3. Word processors in every office, and
4. Personal computers in schools and homes.

Indian tribes are developing their own approved educational materials. New museums featuring Native American materials are making efforts to allow holdings to become more accessible to scholars and Indian people. The 1986 Library of Congress Federal Cylinder Project, returning musical recordings of long ago to Indian tribes, reflects a new attitude. There is a renaissance of Native American culture clubs, dance groups, churches, worship circles. (As one young man said, "It's time to be Indian again.")

Performers brought to the WSU campus for Native Music and related courses

Nez Perce Indian drummers and dancers
Young Nez Perce drummers
Larry Parker, Flathead-Nez Perce
Ed and Tana Nanpooya, Nez Perce
Ed Wapp, Comanche-Sac and Fox
Joe Washington and Children of the Setting Sun, Lummi
Morris and Bertha Dan, Swinomish
Maria and Mike Parker, Makah
Hunt Family Dancers and Carvers, Kwakiutl
Bill Holm, Burke Museum
Johnny Moses, Halkomelem-Swinomish-Yakima
Tulalip Coast Salish Pow-wow Club
Cliff Sijohn, Spokane Coeur d' Alene

Materials developed and approved for use in class, the combined efforts of several contributors

Movies:
- Makah Songs by Helen Peterson
- Nee Mee Poo
- Sla-hal, The Bone Game

Slide shows:
- Basket Weaving in the Pacific Northwest:
  - Beargrass
  - Cedar Bark
  - Sweetgrass
- Bountiful Beaches
- Eskimos of Alaska

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Grandmother's Song, a Gift from the Past
Harry Sam
Makah Songs
Making and Indian Drum
Making an Indian Flute
Prophets of the Plateau
Songs of the Salmon
Their River
Tsimshian Totems of 'Ksan

Audiotape libraries:

Nez Perce Music archive

Monographs:

External Influence in Nez Perce Song
Nez Perce Flute
Nez Perce Hymns
Nez Perce Songs of Historical Significance, as sung by Sol Webb

Videotapes:

Alaska Native Arts Festival
Blunden Harbour
Circle of Song
Coast Salish Indian Song, with Johnny Moses
Dances of the Kwakiutl
Indian Courting Flute, with Ed Wahpeconiah
Inuit Circumpolar Conference
Kwakiutl Museum Opening at Cape Mudge
Lummi Indian Music and Heritage, with Joe Washington
Makah Days
Native Music of the Northwest
Plains and Plateau Singing and Drumming, with Larry Parker
Red Moon Dancers
Skokomish Salmon Ceremony
Squaxin Island Wedding
Swinomish Culture and Music, with Morris and Bertha Dan
Teaching Native American Dances, with Ed Wahpeconiah
Toksook Bay Eskimo Dances
Tulalip coast Salish Pow-Wow Club
Tulalip Salmon Ceremony
William Shelton—A Tribute to My Father

Monetary Resources available to music students at WSU:

Axtell-Parsons-Watters Music Scholarship for Native American musicians
Muriel Emma Dawley Loan Fellowship for Native American music majors

(A personal note: As a non-Indian who began learning about native music only 16 years ago, I have found the experiences related to this subject to be among the most meaningful and rewarding ones of my life. Working with elderly tradition-bearers and being welcomed into home and community has proven an opportunity both fulfilling and enriching, in which I have gained much more than I have given. This is an appropriate time to express my thanks to the many individuals who have shared significant moments with me as a guest in their personal world and as a fellow human inhabiting this rich earth. I have learned much more about the power, dimension, and meaning of music, this art of my profession, than was apparent in the usual process of education.)

Loran Olsen is Professor of Music and Native American Studies at Washington

State University, Pullman, Washington, where he teaches piano, theory, composition, and Native Music of North America. He holds a B.A. from Grinnell College, M.M. from Drake University, and a Ph. D. from the University of Iowa (1960)in piano performance and literature and composition.